

Helpful Hints for Tire Care

The 7 Factors of Proper Tire Selection



- 1 Inflation Pressure:** Always check a tire's air pressure at least once a month! The proper inflation pressure for your tires is printed on the "tire placard" or decal that is located either on the driver's side door edge, door post, glove box door or in the Owner's Manual. **Do not use the maximum inflation pressure that is indicated on the sidewall of the tire, unless directed by the vehicle manufacturer.** The vehicle manufacturer determines the proper inflation pressure, loads and speeds for all tires that are placed on the vehicle.
- 2 Tire Balance & Rotation:** Tires that are out of balance will cause vibration, plus premature and irregular tread wear. Routinely rotating tires will extend their tread life. **Consult your Owner's Manual for proper rotation intervals.**
- 3 Vehicle Loading:** The load carrying capability of your vehicle is also located on the above-mentioned "placard" or decal. **Do not overload your vehicle.**
- 4 Regular Inspection:** Check your tires at least once a month for uneven wear, small cracks in the rubber (anywhere on the tire) and any bulges. **If you find any of these conditions, immediately consult your local tire dealer for diagnosis of the condition.**
- 5 Driving Habits:** Always drive the posted speed limit and avoid hitting curbs with the tire sidewalls. Do not make fast starts and stops or drive over foreign objects and manhole covers in the roadway. Avoid pulling over on the shoulder of a roadway ... this is where all of the debris from the road ends up.
- 6 Vehicle Condition:** Faulty suspension components and improper front wheel alignment can cause both premature and irregular tire wear. **Always have the vehicle serviced on a regular basis.**
- 7 Tire Types & Sizes:** **Never** mix tire sizes or tire constructions (bias vs. radial) on a vehicle. Also, do not mix tread patterns on the same axle.

HOW **2**

Determine Proper Tire Selection



Winter 2001

U.S. General Services Administration
Federal Supply Service
Office of Vehicle Acquisition &
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Tires

Follow The Road To Proper Tire Selection!



US DOT SAFETY STANDARD CODE

Department of Transportation

DOT

Tire Size Coding

L9

Date of Manufacture

036

0300

Tire Manufacturer's Plant Code

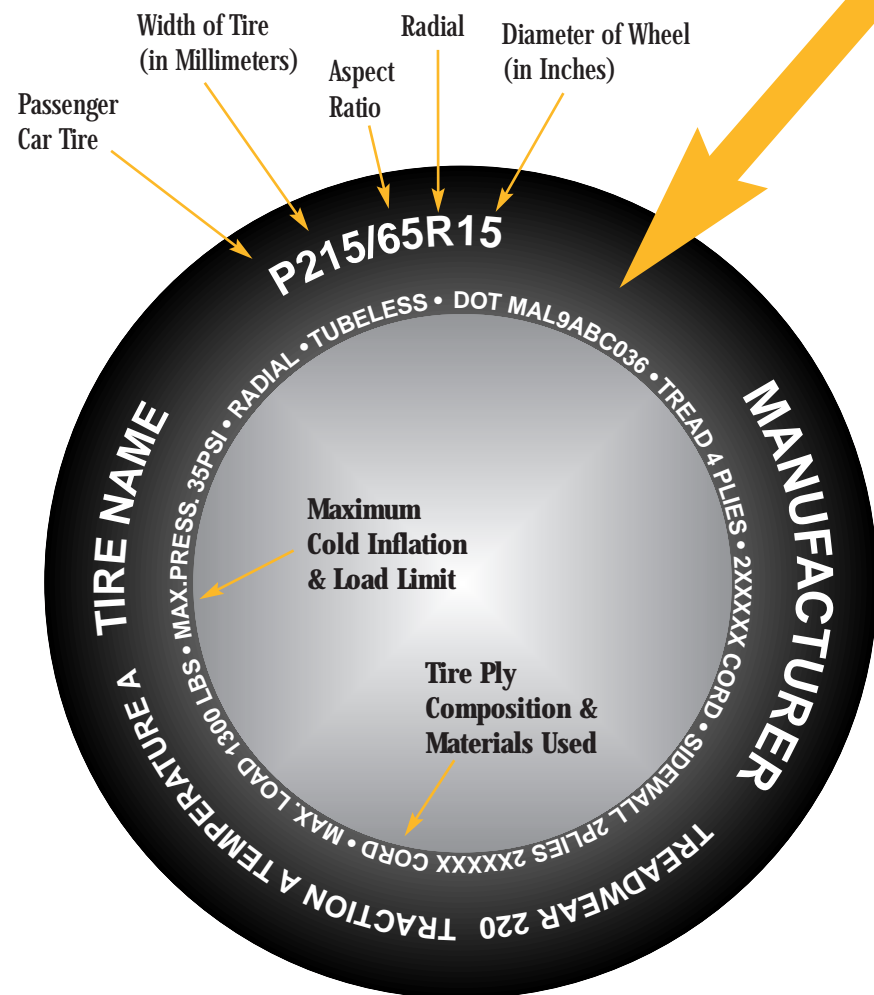
MA

Group of Optional Symbols
from Manufacturer

ABC

When Three Numbers
are Present:
First Two #s = Week
Last # = Year

When Four Numbers
are Present:
First Two #s = Week
Last Two #s = Year



“TREADWEAR, TRACTION & TEMPERATURE”

This sidewall information reflects testing grades in accordance with the Department of Transportation's Uniform Tire Quality Grading (UTQG) program. For more information on the UTQG program, visit the web site:

www.fss.gsa.gov/vehicles

Treadwear: This numerical grade is based on the wear rate of the tire. For example, a tire rated “150” would wear only half as well as a “300” rated tire.

Traction: Traction grades, which range from highest to lowest (with AA being the highest), represent the tire's ability to stop on wet pavement.

Temperature: Temperature grades, which range from highest (A) to lowest (C), signify the tire's ability to resist heat damage and dissipate heat while in service.

Tire Size

On the sidewall of a tire, whether it is a passenger car or light truck tire, there are always several important numbers and codes. (Example: P215/65R15).

What This Means to You

- The “P” stands for passenger. If it is a light truck tire, the size would read LT215/65R15.
- The “215” is the width of the tire in millimeters.
- The “65” is the aspect ratio of the sidewall. It conveys the tire's ratio between the height and width of the tread. Using the above example, the height of the sidewall is 65% of the width of the tread surface.
- The “R” means radial.
- The “15” signifies the diameter of the wheel in inches.

Passenger Car & Light Truck Tires

Passenger car tires (“P” type) come in only one load range, known as “Standard Load Rating.” Inflate tires to the air pressure recommended by the vehicle manufacturer for the speed rating and appropriate load carrying capacity on your vehicle.

Reminder: Before making any changes to the original equipment tire, please consult your vehicle manufacturer.

NOTE: Some light trucks may come equipped with “P” type tires as original equipment.

Light truck tires come in three different load ranges: C, D and E, with E being the highest load rating. Consult your tire dealer or the tire manufacturer for the best load rating application for your vehicle and its environment.

Tire Tread Patterns

There are four basic tread patterns, all which are designed to enhance the vehicle for its particular application.

- **Regular Tread** is the basic tread pattern. It is a rib-type tread that provides excellent highway handling and mileage, as well as very good wet traction.
- **All Season**, which is today's most popular tread pattern, is found on all passenger car and most light truck tires as original equipment. This tread provides provide good dry traction and excellent wet traction. Other features include excellent tread wear characteristics, ample traction in snow conditions and fair traction on ice.
- **All Terrain**, for light trucks, provides traction in most soil conditions (except heavy mud). It also provides good highway traction and fair highway wet traction, with moderate tread wear characteristics.

- **On-Off Road** tires are primarily designed for good traction on secondary roads. Due to the tread's “open cleat” design, it is excellent in mud and snow. While dry highway traction is good, wet highway traction is not as good as the All Terrain due to the lack of tread sipes (tiny slits incorporated into the tread for enhanced wet traction). Cutting and chipping resistance is excellent due to its soft compound, but tread life is shorter.

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